

begin again by cabaretghost (orphan_account)

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Summary:

eleven finally meets mike after she escapes the upside down

1. Chapter 1

The night was overbearing, chilly fog draped over Hawkins and the nearby forest. The pale moonlight rendered the area nearly colorless and the young girl sprawled out on the forest floor had to squint to make out the shapes of the trees and logs that surrounded her.

Eleven pulled herself off of the ground, dirt dusted over her cheeks, her, no *Nancy's*, light pink dress ripped and muddied. *How long have I been gone?*, she wondered idly.

She was too exhausted to give it too much thought, the Upside Down had taken any sense of time and direction from her. Eleven sighed and looked at the faint light of Hawkins streaming through the trees. Her heart was heavy with the pressure of the thought of the friends she had left behind. *And him...*

Eleven's heart squeezed at the thought of finally seeing him again. Her lips parted and she uttered a single word as she trudged throughout the dried leaves and pine needles with a newfound determination.

"Mike..."

Walking along the road into town had earned her a few honks from cars, all of which she ignored. Eleven was too preoccupied with her current task to let anything so simple derail her.

The idea of seeing Mike, laying in the blanket fort, eating Eggos again, overwhelmed her with emotion and before she knew it, a stray tear dropped down her cheek and she was shaking. She hiccuped and pressed forward, using the few trips she took with Mike, Dustin, and Lucas through these neighborhoods as a vague reference to find the Wheeler's house again.

After several turns which she suspected *might* have been unnecessary, she arrived at Mike's house, the familiar feeling of warmth and

comfort flooding her all at once. She felt tears prickling at her eyes, hot and overbearing.

Only two lights were on, in the living room and Nancy's room. Eleven stopped midway down the lawn, wondering if her unannounced presence would alert anyone. She shook her head once at herself, dismissing the thought in favor of her need to see Mike again, the need to feel *safe* again. She climbed up the porch steps, wiping the tears from her eyes and taking a deep breath.

Eleven knocked on the door gently, all of her fears tugging at her heart insistently. After a few heavy seconds, the door creaked open to reveal none other than Mike himself. Eleven gasped despite herself at the sight of him and teared up for the third time that night.

Mike's hair was knotted and greasy, the area under his eyes dark, and he was as white as a sheet. "Eleven, you're...you're *here*," he whispered, his voice tinged with awe and slight disbelief. He let his own tears spill over his now rosy cheeks as he wrapped his arms around her, sobs wracking both of their skinny frames.

Eleven rested her head on Mike's shoulder gently. "Yes, I'm here...Mike," she answered quietly, listening to Mike's soft cries and letting herself feel his warmth after so long.

2. Chapter 2

Mike awkwardly stepped back from Eleven's embrace after a few heartstopping moments, sniffing and drying his tears on his shirt sleeve. "God, are you...are you okay?," Mike asked after he managed to collect himself enough to speak. He studied her carefully, inspecting the various cuts and bruises that covered her arms and legs. Mike's gaze rested on a small scrape on her left cheek.

Eleven looked Mike in the eyes softly and nodded once. Her wide brown eyes were ringed with red and her entire body shook with silent sobs. She reached a hand out towards Mike's weakly and dropped it after a moment of hesitation.

"You don't need to be afraid anymore, El," Mike reassured her with a sad smile. "You're home now. You're safe...We're safe." He reached his hand out to hers and intertwined their fingers and squeezed her hand gently.

Mike took the opportunity to tug Eleven's hand towards the house, dragging her inside. She walked alongside Mike without so much as a second thought. The two descended the stairs to the basement quietly, the silence comfortable.

The light in the basement was on already and the small table Mike, Lucas, and Dustin sat at to play D&D had a few rule books scattered across it. Eleven gasped as her focus settled on the fort Mike had made for her when she had first taken her down there. She didn't expect him to leave it there, she had imagined that he didn't think he would see her again after all that time. Her heart squeezed slightly at the thought of him hoping for her return, but she wasn't sure that she knew why she felt the way she did.

Mike let go of Eleven's hand and watched her step towards the fort slowly. She knelt down onto the ground and laid her head onto the pile of pillows. It looked like it hadn't been disturbed since she left. She curled her scraped legs under herself and sighed.

Mike watched her for a minute and smiled at her in spite of himself. He walked towards the fort and sat down next to Eleven. Her cheeks

reddened slightly and she moved over to make more room for Mike. He leaned down and kissed her on the cheek, his cheeks flaming red. "El...I love you," Mike whispered.

Eleven didn't fully understand the sentiment, but she smiled at him anyways and snuggled up closer to him. "Mike...what is love?" she asked, her voice but a hushed whisper.